

On the defensive -making plans {Part1} -going for ruffs

Opponents have bid confidently to their 4Sp contract and partner has made the initial lead of the 9 clubs.

Here is the position with you still to play.

{dummy}	
KJ65	
876	
AQ76	
32	{you}
	1093
	2
	K8543
	A1054

The objective of course is to beat the contract and take 4 tricks .

You can see 1 certain trick in the Ace clubs and a fairly good chance of another trick in the K Diamonds.

Where might the other two tricks come from ?

Before playing a card you should pause and try and work out what tricks partner can and can't (!) have.

Partner led the 9 clubs - we are probably going to play the Ace ; is there any point in returning the club ? ie do we expect partner to win any tricks in clubs ?

Well unless the lead is a singleton * {see below for reasons why it isn't } then partner has led top of nothing and the declarer owns the K + Q + J clubs. So , no other tricks to be got in clubs.

We might make a trick with our K of Diamonds but partner surely can't contribute much there.

And Hearts ? Well there are possibilities. Partner can have the Ace or ... perhaps the King or for that matter even the Queen. With any of these cards partner could take a trick. NB we don't *know* that partner *will* be able to take a Heart trick, but they *might*. If partner does make a trick in Hearts then we have a likely 3 tricks and there may yet be a chance for a 4th trick if partner deduces our heart was a singleton. ie they will win and return the suit and we will ruff.

Now that was all a bit laboured and you might have thought it obvious to win the club and switch to a Heart immediately ; all very good if you did but it is the sort of approach that needs to be adopted on all hands when you are defending however easy or difficult they might seem.

Over the page we are going to again defend and look at each suit in turn before returning a lead or switching to a new suit. The suit we do decide to lead will usually be the one that we hope to make tricks in (ourselves) or the one that partner might. We will have the roughest of rough plans how we might beat the declarer's contract.

* if the 9 clubs was a singleton then declarer has six clubs -most unlikely as they are in 4 Sp !